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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL WORK

PARENTAL ATTITUDES AS THEY AFFECT JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A THESIS

Submitted by

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(A.B., College of Mount Saint Vincent, 1930)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for
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CHAPTER 12
Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's
longing for itself.

They come through you but not from
you,

And though they are with you yet they
belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not
your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not
their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of
tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not
even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek
not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries
with yesterday.

Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

PREFACE

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PREFACE

In the following cases an attempt has been made to analyze parental attitudes as they affect juvenile delinquency. It is by no means a merely objective statement of facts, but rather a subjective interpretation of one of the many factors in the life experience which determines the individual's make-up, his adjustment, his ideations, and which undertakes to integrate all factors to a specific configuration.

Parental attitudes, as such, have not been segregated and labeled in any instance as a direct cause of delinquency. That these attitudes were in some measure a destructive or constructive force in the treatment of these delinquents studied here no doubt will be granted. While scientific approach to juvenile delinquency has considered separately, social objectivations, social interrelations, biological constitution, social and biological inheritance, environment, material circumstances, personality, life history, experiences, ideologies, - yet, nevertheless, they must also be seen synthetically at the same time. The writer realizes that any treatment which does not consider the total personality will have missed the end for which it

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Names and other identifying information have been changed to avoid recognition. These cases were treated by student workers during the years 1934 and 1935 at Boston University School of Religious and Social Work, as a part of the required field work for Clinical Case Studies under Doctor Walter Beck, clinical psychologist.

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(1) Adler, Alfred, *Understanding Human Nature*, p. 124.

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INTRODUCTION

Alfred Adler has this to say: "It will be difficult to mobilize a child who has grown up in a family where there has never been a proper development of the feeling of tenderness. His whole attitude of life will be a gesture of escape, an evasion of all love and tenderness. The identical effect may be produced by unthinking parents, educators, or other adults, who teach children that love and tenderness are improper, ridiculous, or unmanly by impressing some pernicious motto upon them. It is not so seldom that we find a child is taught that tenderness is ridiculous. This is especially the case among those children who have often been ridiculed. Such children are veritably afraid of showing emotion or feeling because they feel that their tendency to show love toward others is ridiculous and unmanly. They fight against normal tenderness as though it were an instrument to enslave or degrade them. Thus boundaries to the love life can be set in early childhood. After a brutal education in which all tenderness is damned up and repressed a child withdraws from the circle of his environment and loses, little by little, contacts which are of utmost importance to his soul." (1)

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On the other hand August Aichhorn points out: "A too intense early love relationship to parents or to brothers and sisters often leads to delinquency. An affectionate attitude of the child toward members of the family is requisite for normal development. This affection, however, normally should begin to lessen before puberty, because puberty is the period in which love objects in the family must be given up and exchanged for objects outside the family. If the love relationships within the family are too strong, that is if a libidinal fixation has occurred the way is prepared for neurosis or for delinquency." (1)

Obviously there is a middle course upon which the child-parent relationship may embark with a reasonable hope of molding the child's life along adequate lines so that a good adjustment to life situations may be approximated and the tendency toward delinquency lessened. What that middle course must be will depend upon the individuals because back of all lies the riddle of the child's own personality and the character of his parents. However much one may minimize heredity and magnify the influences of environment, it still remains a fact that different children from the outset react differently to similar experiences. While occasionally it may seem that a parent's mistakes were

(1) Aichhorn, August: Wayward Youth, p. 48.

On the other hand, Ainsworth points out: "A too intense early love relationship to parents or to brothers and sisters often leads to delinquency. An affectionate attitude of the child toward members of the family is requisite for normal development. This affection, however, normally should begin to lessen before puberty, because puberty is the period in which love objects in the family must be given up and exchanged for objects outside the family. If the love relationships within the family are too strong, that is if a libidinal fixation has occurred the way is prepared for neurosis or for delinquency." (1)

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wholly responsible for a child's delinquency, more often factors in the school or community interact with these mistakes to produce the problem. Strictly speaking then, it may not be proven scientifically that a mother's or a father's behavior is responsible for a child's behavior. All that can be done is to bring forward typical examples of child-parent attitudes which might have a causal connection with delinquency.

Mary Buell Sayles takes the above position and reminds us that: -"adult and child alike, has been molded by forces beyond his control";(1). Therefore, it is practically impossible for any human being to maintain a flawless adjustment to a constantly changing environment. Too often parents provide for the physical and intellectual needs of the child while they disregard utterly his emotional needs. Mary Buell Sayles calls to mind these needs tacitly accepted by most of us but because of our very familiarity frequently overlooked. She lists the emotional needs of the child as; need of security, need of a chance to grow up, need of a concrete ideal to grow toward, need of adult companionship at all stages of growth. Thomas differs from this slightly in what he calls four wishes; desire for affection; desire for security; desire for new experience;

(1) Sayles, Mary Buell: The Problem Child at Home, Preface

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desire for expression. It would seem, however, when these emotional needs of the child are met by understanding parents, the personality integration of the child and an ability to cope with life situations adequately may be reasonably expected.

Since the problem of juvenile delinquency is preeminently one of prevention, the cooperation of parents is imperative for its solution. Such cooperation is often found to be lacking in the case of children who come under the care of social agencies. Many of these children become social problems precisely because their parents fail to take the necessary care of them. But some times children of this class lack the proper guidance at home not through ill will on the part of parents but through their lack of knowledge. In these instances, something may be done to remedy conditions. Parents can be instructed in the understanding and in the guidance of their offspring. Many parents feel utterly lost when they are confronted by delinquent tendencies or delinquency itself in their adolescent boys and girls and they welcome reliable advice in their difficulties. For this reason Child Guidance Clinics have been established and despairing parents are finding it easier to discuss their problems with the psychiatrists and social workers found in the Clinics.

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The first requisite of wholesome childhood is an environment promoting physical and social development. The home is the institution that normally fulfills this function. Society at the present time accords to parents the privilege and responsibility of the care and guidance of their children. Only when the home situation presents very grave dangers does society interfere to remove the child or attempt other adjustment. "The great importance of the family lies in the fact that the persons composing it are the first human objectives of the child's interest and love, and that that interest and love must of necessity receive its first set, first impression, first form as a result of these first experiences." (1) From the moment it is able to observe anything the child looks to its father and mother for guidance, care, and understanding. It looks to them at first for the fulfillment of the four emotional needs of affection, recognition, security, and new experience, and models their conduct on theirs. Needless to say parental failures and parental attitudes are without question reasons for some of the behavior problems in children.

Under parental failures, the most outstanding is the broken home. It should be stated here, however, that because the two parents are living under the same roof it

(1) White, W.A.: Mental Hygiene of Childhood, p. 65.

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(1) White, W.A.: Mental Hygiene of Childhood, p. 22.

does not mean they have established a successful home. Many studies have been conducted on the relation of broken homes to juvenile delinquency. In New Goals in Probation, Cooley states that about half his 2976 offenders were from broken homes. Blanche Weill found in her survey that twice as many delinquents came from broken homes as would be expected from the total incidence of broken homes in the United States. These two examples serve to illustrate the general conclusions drawn from many studies of the effects of broken homes on the child.

Perhaps a corollary of the broken home is the one in which there is utter neglect and complete lack of control. Burt found that the coefficient of correlation of delinquency with defective discipline was .59.

The next type of parental failure is shown in vicious home influences. The four most important ways in which vicious home influences are revealed are quarreling, alcoholism, criminalism, and immorality. Naturally such influences have a most detrimental effect on the growing, impressionable child. Burt estimates the correlation coefficient of delinquency with vicious homes at .39. The Gluecks found that 70% of their subjects came from homes with low moral standards.

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homes on children's conduct has always been a well-established and recognized fact, although it is only recently that it has been verified so extensively by statistics. There are few to-day who will deny the bad influences such expressions of parental failure have on young children.

There is yet another type of parental influence more subtle, less tangible, and perhaps less immediate in its results, which, nevertheless, plays a most important part in the development of the child. Father Furfey says that parents may influence their children by explicit and implicit control. By explicit control he means insistence on certain rules and enforcement of them. This is conscious control with a set purpose which may be enforced by moral teaching and reinforced by a system of rewards and punishments. Implicit control is a subconscious process, or at least it is exercised unconsciously, and it occurs during the child's most impressionistic years. The parent influences the child's conduct, for the child patterns its conduct on whatever is given approval or disapproval in the home. So, too, the parents influence the child by their attitude toward him and toward his siblings.

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One of the great contributions which the parent makes to the child is that of preparing him to assume the obligations and responsibilities which are associated with

independence. If it be true that children, as a group, are throwing off the parental shackles at an earlier date than they have done heretofore, it means that parents must see that they are adequately equipped with habits and personality traits and mental attitudes toward life that will work out to their advantage. There are those parents who have built their lives so intimately around their children that they become acutely unhappy when they appreciate that they are no longer as necessary to the adolescent as they were to the younger child. It cannot be denied that this attitude of the parent toward the child is fundamentally selfish and not infrequently results unhappily for all concerned, especially if the child has not quite grown up himself.

Six striking instances of parental attitudes that lead to behavior problems in children may be cited. They are self-explanatory and hardly need to be enlarged upon extensively. They are: (1) too concentrated attention (This is frequently showered upon the only child and is apt to make it selfish and spoiled, leading to definite maladjustment when entering school.); (2) inconsistent discipline (A child soon learns that if he cannot have a thing one day he may get it the next, unless the parents are good disciplinarians.); (3) exaggerated parental love (This bears a relationship to the first mentioned, but it

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is likely to work in the opposite direction as well, and make the parent too stern instead of too indulgent.); (4) satisfaction of parental ideals, particularly educational (This is especially important as a factor in producing behavior problems in children. Parents try to push their children in school, and so stress the importance of academic achievement that the child becomes acutely conscious of failure and develops behavior problems.); (5) satisfaction of parental impulse to dominate (This is often a carry-over from the parents' childhood, when they were dominated by an older brother or sister or a parent.); (6) favoritisms, antagonisms, and jealousies revealed by parents toward children.

The above list of parental attitudes is by no means exhaustive. It merely is suggestive of the type of parental influences affecting a child's life and conduct. It would be practically impossible to enumerate all of the attitudes and failures of parents that are reflected in their children. Suffice it is to say that every parental attitude and failure influences a child's life and leaves a permanent impress.

Much has been said about the parents' responsibility toward the child, and during early years it is the parent who must supply the initiative, judgment, and patience which this task entails. But it must be kept in mind that

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as the child advances in years he, too, will have more and more to contribute towards the happiness and satisfaction of family life. Essentially, the relationship between parent and child should be maintained by a mutual effort to acquire a better understanding of each other's personality, each other's interests, problems, and pleasures - both parent and child endeavoring on the one hand to appreciate the various factors contributing to their respective health, efficiency, and happiness, and, on the other hand, to gain a clearer conception of the influences leading to dissatisfaction, failure, and defeat.

There is no time when life presents so many doubts and indecisions as during the adolescent years. To many young persons, life becomes a very perplexing problem as their earlier hopes and aspirations turn out to be daydreams and illusions, and there is a tendency for them to be overwhelmed with the futility of effort. The child who has had the advantage of living in a home with a religious background - that type of religion which is practiced as well as preached and which teaches the individual to think in terms of others than himself - finds that something very fundamental and important has been woven into the moral fabric of his personality. Religion helps to give to the boy or girl that sense of security and worthwhileness about life both present and future that the maturing individual

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CASE STUDIES

(1) McCarthy, Raphael C. (S.J.): Training the Adolescent,
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JOSEPH

Joseph was brought into Juvenile Court on the charge of larceny of books valued at \$2500 taken from a public building. It was testified that the books were valuable because they were old and hard to duplicate. They were the property of a publishing company and on the day in question were being exhibited in one of the roomy hotels because of a teachers' convention.

On the day before the theft two boys had called at the hotel asking for the exhibitors. They said they were looking for the exhibitors. They were refused. On the day of the theft they came back with badges like those used by the teachers attending the convention. They got a room and went to the room frequently.

CASE STUDIES

When police investigated they found most of the staff that had been stolen in the boys' room. Joseph admitted the theft, but refused to implicate the boy who was with him. He said he had taken novels, notebooks, etc., and when he saw the box he thought it might be valuable. He was disappointed when he saw that it contained books. When he and the other boy started to go home the hotel detective stopped them and Joseph admitted his guilt. He had left the books in the hotel room.

PRIVATE ROAD

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On the date before the theft two boys had called at the hotel asking for part day rate. They said they were working for the exhibitors. They were refused. On the day of the theft they came back with badges like those used by the teachers attending the convention. They got a room and went to the room frequently.

When police investigated they found most of the stuff that had been stolen in the boys' room. Joseph admitted the theft, but refused to implicate the boy who was with him. He said he had taken pencils, notebooks, etc., and when he saw the box he thought it might be valuable. He was disappointed when he saw that it contained books. When he and the other boy started to go home the house detective stopped them and Joseph admitted his guilt. He had left the books in the hotel room.

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Joseph told the Judge that he wanted to be a "big shot". He had always wanted to hire a room and when he heard that a convention was being held at this hotel it seemed like a "swell idea". He did not plan to steal anything; the "idea came all of a sudden". He had never stolen before, he said, and his mother and father who were present in court told the Judge that he had always been a model boy with good school reports and regular church attendance (Catholic). After the Judge talked to Joseph, at length, alone, he found him delinquent and placed him on indefinite probation with a suspended sentence to Shirley.

The worker found that Joseph was an adopted boy. The probate court revealed that he was taken by his parents (adoptive) when he was three months old from St. Mary's Infant Asylum. At the time of his delinquency he had just passed his sixteenth birthday. His adoptive parents professed to know nothing about his parents or background. They saw him in the asylum, were told that he was a healthy youngster in the legal custody of St. Mary's, and decided to adopt him. The family consists of two adopted daughters and the maternal grandparents who have lived with Joseph's parents for many years.

The family occupied an eight room house in a comfortable, middle class neighborhood. They were held in high

Joseph told the Judge that he wanted to be a "big shot". He had always wanted to have a room and when he heard that a convention was being held at this hotel it seemed like a "swell idea". He did not plan to steal anything; the "idea came all of a sudden". He had never stolen before, he said, and his mother and father who were present in court told the Judge that he had always been a model boy with good school reports and regular church attendance (Catholic). After the Judge talked to Joseph, at length, alone, he found him delinquent and placed him on indefinite probation with a suspended sentence to thirty days.

The worker found that Joseph was an adopted boy. The probate court revealed that he was taken by his parents (adoptive) when he was three months old from St. Mary's Infant Asylum. At the time of his delinquency he had just passed his sixteenth birthday. His adoptive parents professed to know nothing about his parents or background. They saw him in the asylum, were told that he was a healthy youngster in the legal custody of St. Mary's, and decided to adopt him. The family consists of two adopted daughters and the maternal grandparents who have lived with Joseph's parents for many years.

The family occupied an eight room house in a comfortable, middle class neighborhood. They were held in high

regard by their neighbors and valued the opinion of their neighbors almost to excess. The mother seemed to be forever reminding the children that this or that which they might do would make the "neighbors talk".

The adoptive mother was a neat appearing woman apparently quite strict but presumably devoted to her three children. She wanted them to be "somebody", and to be a "credit" to her. The adoptive father was an Elevated conductor. He seemed to be a meek person with nothing whatever to say about the management of the home or the upbringing of the children. He left it all in "Mama's hands".

The maternal grandmother was keenly interested in Joseph, her favorite. She wept copiously every time the worker visited and blamed Joseph's delinquency on the younger generation in general who was decidedly more wicked than the youth of her day. She told the worker that she and her daughter had always lived together and that both of them brought up the children. She dismissed her own husband and Joseph's father by saying: "You know how men are; they just can't be bothered."

Joseph seemed to be a friendly, well-mannered, soft-spoken boy, rather delicate in appearance. His mother said he had a bad heart condition but later clinic appointments did not bear out this statement. At the time of his delin-

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quency, he was in the eighth grade in a parochial school. His parents were very anxious that the worker would not contact the school because it would make him lose prestige in the eyes of the sisters who taught him. He was interested in aviation and had formed a club of his own known as the "Flying Air Corps". He seemed immersed in various activities and always to be the leader of these activities. He played the piano, violin, and drum but none very well despite his mother's assertion that he was "so talented".

Joseph never seemed able to talk to the worker alone and direct questions put to him by the worker were always helped along by his mother, who insisted that her Joseph was just about all that one could wish for in a son, and she continually thanked God for him. Joseph broke several appointments made with the worker away from home. His mother always wrote a note for him apologizing for breaking the appointments. She said Joseph had so many duties and activities that she did not believe it would be possible for him to go to see the worker, and couldn't the worker "drop by occasionally to see Joseph and the family". It was practically impossible to make her understand that the worker felt that Joseph should be away from the family for a time.

After a great many attempts and much persuasion on the part of the worker, Joseph was finally examined at a

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After a great many attempts and much persuasion on the part of the worker, Joseph was finally examined at a

guidance clinic. The report showed him to be a boy of many activities and much initiative. He was retarded two years in school. In the test period he was found to be self-assured and alert. In bearing and speech he was decidedly brighter than tests showed. He makes extraordinarily good contacts and evidently sets out to make a good impression - is quite sophisticated. He seemed to be emotionally well poised and evidently quite a leader among boys. Physical: About normal height - somewhat underweight. Fair strength. Somewhat irregular features with alert and responsive expression. Mental: Fair average general ability. Fair apperceptions visual, but poor verbal apperceptions. Vocabulary not nearly so good as might be expected. Does but sixth and seventh grade work except spelling which is good. The psychiatrist felt that he had no serious intention of getting into serious stealing. As far as general tendencies go, in his interpretation the boy was in no immediate danger of getting into trouble in the near future. It was felt that the mother should be made to appreciate what bearing her attitudes have on the boy. Camp placement was recommended. The mother, however, could not bear to have Joseph away from her and was inclined to feel that the worker interfered too much in the family life.

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At this point the worker was informed that Joseph had been brought into camp when he was about 10 years old.

house and the larceny of jewelry. Joseph said that while walking around one night he met another boy whom he did not know. They saw an open window and without thought acting, as Joseph said, on the impulse and the suggestions of the other boy, they crawled through the window and rummaged the house. Joseph found the jewelry and on the way out the lady of the house caught them. Joseph got away but the other boy gave his name. In court Joseph had no excuses to offer. He was frightened to death and said it was done without any thought. He was very penitent. At first the Judge was inclined to surrender him but his mother pleaded so hard and influential people appeared asking that he be given one more chance before committing him, that the Judge decided to give him that chance.

The mother promised to cooperate with the worker and to keep regular appointments at the guidance clinic. The worker felt that from the point of view of social standards and living conditions, the social situation of the boy was sound. From the psychological point of view, the boy's home situation appeared as the essential problem. The crucial point seemed to be the mother's own somewhat neurotic condition, which - by the way of over-affection and overprotection - affected him and he responded by nervousness, an almost dynamic activity, and a considerable amount of "show-off-ism". The mother manifested cooperation, under-

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standing, and sympathy for the worker's efforts but was likely to counteract these efforts subconsciously, on the basis of her own dynamic entanglement. His activities were too closely supervised by his mother who did her best to keep him on a 12 year emotional level. She said repeatedly that she did not want him to grow up. She admitted that she was not happily married but that her husband was good to her. There probably was no affection in the marriage and Joseph seemed to be all she had and she seemed to build all her adjustments around him. She admitted one day that as he grew older he would grow away from her and this she could not bear. She appeared to get her ego satisfaction from making him obey her implicitly and by directing every move he made. That seemed to be her life and one which she would not give up easily.

The worker visited for months and infrequently saw Joseph alone but he was not responsive, so conditioned did he seem to be by his mother. She was constantly calling the worker and asking him to recommend that the case be filed.

On the surface Joseph seemed friendly, polite, with a variety of interests. Only slight symptoms, moments in which he seemed to lose himself, indicated that his well-played role might not be identical with his "real" dynamic formulation. His delinquency seemed to be a direct outcome of his peculiar response to his peculiar situation - a new

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field of activity, heroism of a slightly sordid flavor, offering reasons for satisfaction and self-pity as well. The worker tried to establish a controlling personal relationship in order to put a constructive male influence into the situation - to dissolve the influence of the mother to some extent. The plan might have worked had his probation period been longer but pressure was brought to bear and since no other delinquency (known) had occurred, the case was filed. Unless the influence and overprotection of the mother is broken as he grows older it does not seem far afield to predict future delinquencies.

Investigation revealed that the boy in question was in Juvenile Court shortly after Richard and was sent to the Industrial Training School.

The family consisted of the maternal grandparents who had lately moved into the home because of the grandfather's unemployment, his parents, and three younger sisters. His father worked occasionally at odd jobs but the family budget was supplemented rather consistently except for an occasional week now and then by a Family Welfare agency. This agency reported that the family had never been able to manage adequately. The father even in pre-depression days never worked very steadily and the mother was obliged to go out by the day to do washing in order to make ends meet as she said. Of late she was not well enough to do this sort

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RICHARD

Richard, 14, found his way into Juvenile Court by breaking and entering and was placed on probation. Supposedly it was his first offense; at least, it was his first appearance in court. He was inclined to blame another boy for his delinquency and said that as long as this boy remained in the neighborhood he was sure to get into difficulty. When he was questioned about this he said that the other lad thought up all kinds of exciting things to do and he just went along with him. Investigation revealed that the boy in question was in Juvenile Court shortly after Richard and was sent to the Industrial Training School.

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of work and the doctor advised against it. The family worker did not feel that she had ever completely gained the confidence of the family and was not able to give much social history. The family was not known to any other agency.

The family lived in an extremely poor section of the city in a tenement district. They occupied five rooms and the sleeping quarters while adequate were cramped and ill-lighted.

In the beginning, despite the poor social and economic situation, the worker thought that the family were cooperative and sincerely concerned about Richard. Richard showed some slight interest in club activities but the boys' worker felt that he could never quite reach him. He belonged to the Boy Scouts but the Boy Scout leader also reported that he never entered into the spirit of the club as did the other boys. He thought that he was not physically well. Richard also showed symptoms which indicated a psychopathological problem: nervousness, nail-biting, enuresis, temper tantrums, and general emotional instability.

The worker established a good rapport with the family and eventually built up a fairly friendly relationship with Richard. He confided to the worker that he was not happy at home. Nothing was ever his fault; he thought that his mother was mean to him and was heard to say so often that he liked good times as well as she did and he was going to have

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them. He could not enlarge upon what he thought were the good times his mother had, but he took the attitude, characterized by his first statement that another boy was to blame for his delinquency, that someone else was forever to blame for his lack of fun, etc. He thought his teachers were unfair to him and inclined to favor "smarter kids". His school work was poor and his teachers said that he seemed to be too tired or too lazy to bother. They did not feel that he was mentally below par.

Richard's father beat him upon several occasions for failing to come home at a stated time. At these times Richard's grandparents sided with Richard and blamed the father for his lack of understanding and for his severity. This brought on a family quarrel, which Richard hugely enjoyed; the mother would then enter into it and take Richard's part too. His mother vacillated between arbitrary methods of discipline and giving in to him by coddling him. Usually after these quarrels he was able to get money from his mother for the movies. He seemed to get genuine enjoyment out of repeating to the worker just how mad his mother and father got over him and what they said to each other. When the worker tried to explain the situation to him and to impress upon him the necessity of admitting his fault when he was in error, he became sulking and would walk off shouting: "You're just like the rest, always down on me."

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Then he would not keep his appointments and the worker went to the home again.

The worker stumbled in on one of these quarrels in the home and found the whole family in an uproar. Richard was shouting at his mother because she would not let him stay out of doors after nine, his father was shouting because he could get no peace and the grandparents were adding their bit defending Richard. The little girls were crying in their bed room because they had been disobedient and were put to bed early. Richard explained in no uncertain manner that they had also been beaten because they refused to stop crying. Apparently the beating was not effective because their wails were quickly distinguished.

It was some time after the worker's arrival that peace finally was restored. It was not possible to discuss the situation calmly because one by one they became excited again. Richard dared to voice his chief complaint as follows: "It is always do this or do that or you will be beaten and sent to bed." Only the worker's presence intervened to stop what had all the earmarks of another quarrel. The parents complained that they could do nothing with Richard because his grandparents interfered and the latter were equally as insistent that the parents were too hard on him. It was quite evident from little things which Richard said and from his reactions that he endeavored to play one

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against the other to further his own ends.

The worker had tried several times to get Richard into a clinic and finally succeeded. The doctor found him extremely nervous and much underweight. About this time he suffered severe ear aches which nearly developed into mastoiditis. The doctor advised foster home placement in view of his physical condition. About this time, too, he was studied by a child guidance clinic who strongly recommended foster home placement. (No report of this clinic included in the case record.)

The case was discussed with a child-placing agency, who agreed to accept the child for foster home placement. The worker severed his relationship with Richard because it was necessary from an agency viewpoint. He was not able to follow him further. The present status of the case is not known other than that no further delinquency has been reported.

Grace professed to love her brothers and sisters and to be especially fond of her mother. Her mother, she said, had married when she was sixteen and regretted it. She was worn out with childbearing and while still a young woman (33) gave the appearance of being at least fifty. When the worker first visited she was quite ill and about to be confined at a charity hospital.

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GRACE

Grace, 14, was brought into Juvenile Court on a stubborn child complaint by her father, and placed on probation. The worker found that she was the oldest of twelve children with a new baby expected during the month. Her home was overcrowded in a congested and notoriously bad section of town. Her father drove a taxi and made on the average of \$18.00 a week, he said. He received in addition to this a \$30.00 government compensation which paid the rent (\$25.00).

Grace said that she had run away from home because her father beat her. Her mother corroborated her story to the worker but said that Grace was wild and wanted to "hang around the Corner" and be with the bad boys of the neighborhood. She was afraid that Grace would get into trouble and ruin her life. Her mother said she had married when she was sixteen and regretted it. She was worn out with childbearing and while still a young woman (33) gave the appearance of being at least fifty. When the worker first visited she was quite ill and about to be confined at a charity hospital.

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Grace said that she had run away from home because her father beat her. Her mother corroborated her story to the worker but said that Grace was wild and wanted to "hang around the corner" and be with the bad boys of the neighborhood. She was afraid that Grace would get into trouble and ruin her life. Her mother said she had carried when she was sixteen and reported it. She was worn out with childbearing and while still a young woman (33) gave the appearance of being at least fifty. When the worker first visited she was quite ill and about to be confined at a charity hospital.

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doubt to her physical condition, was extremely irritable and expected Grace to take over the care of the home. The worker explained that this was too great a responsibility for a girl of her years. Through the cooperation of a social agency it was possible to get a housekeeper to come into the home. This agency planned a budget and supplemented financially for some time. After the birth of a baby girl the mother came back into the home but she was not able to assume the care of the home. However, the father refused to keep the housekeeper and the social agency was forced to withdraw their contacts with the family. Grace took over the responsibility but since she could not go out during the day she went out at night while her father was out driving his taxi. One night her father came home unexpectedly and found her in a nearby doorway with one of the "bad boys" of the neighborhood. He beat her unmercifully, she said, and marks of the beating were evident on her body when the worker saw her two days later. A children's society had been called in by one of the neighbors, but they were unable to gather sufficient evidence to bring a neglect charge in court.

The worker was never able to see the father except upon rare occasions and he refused to discuss plans for Grace. He seemed to be drinking most of the time, and the worker learned from the family and from neighbors who volunteered

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the information that he often came home highly intoxicated and proceeded not only to beat Grace but also his wife.

The Children's Society was again contacted - this time by the worker, who felt definitely that Grace ought to be taken out of the home. The mother agreed to allow Grace to be placed if placement could be arranged. The worker was finally able to persuade the father that it would be much better for all concerned if this were done. A child-placing agency accepted the case and placement was made.

The worker had no further contact for three months, at which time Grace again appeared in court. She had run away from the foster home and had been gone three days before the police picked her up. She admitted that she had spent at least one night in a garage with the attendant and had had sexual intercourse with him. The court committed her to an institution and there she was found to be pregnant. Some months later the worker learned that she had purposely brought on a miscarriage by falling down stairs, although she insisted that the fall was accidental.

She is still in an institution and will remain there for six more months until probation period is over. The worker has kept up her contact with the family. Her father received \$1000.00 bonus and the family has moved to a much better neighborhood. They have purchased new furniture and the general social set-up seems to be improved. The mother's

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health is better and she is ready to admit that practically all blame should be placed upon the parents. She feels, and the worker is inclined to agree with her, that the stark poverty of her home, her many children, and her husband's low wages all contributed to Grace's delinquency.

The mother is willing to follow the advice of a child guidance clinic and to prepare her home to receive Grace when she is ready to come home. The plan may not work because the money which has eased the economic situation is being spent too fast and the financial set-up will probably revert to its former state. The worker has suggested that if a child-placing agency again were to become interested, placement of Grace for a temporary period might be good. The present status of the case is indefinite.

the first time. However, four years later she was again arrested for larceny and committed to the Women's Reformatory. While on parole from the Reformatory she married one John Smith (forced) and as a result of this union had one child, Richard. Her husband was killed in an automobile accident shortly after the marriage. The mother continued to be an unstable individual of questionable habits and three years after her husband's death an illegitimate child, John, was born. She named one man as the father but paternity was not proved in court.

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John (14) was brought into Juvenile Court on a larceny charge. It was found that he had taken \$11.00 from a man's pocket. He returned \$6.55 to the police woman and said that he had spent the rest on candy, amusements, etc., at one of the nearby beaches. John was placed on six months' probation.

The worker found that the family had been known to many agencies throughout the city and that the social history was very poor. Investigation disclosed that John's mother presented a behavior problem at an early age and that she spent three years at the parental school. She was arrested for larceny but was not committed to a reformatory the first time. However, four years later she was again arrested for larceny and committed to the Women's Reformatory. While on parole from the Reformatory she married one John Smith (forced) and as a result of this union had one child, Richard. Her husband was killed in an automobile accident shortly after the marriage. The mother continued to be an unstable individual of questionable habits and three years after her husband's death an illegitimate child, John, was born. She named one man as the father but paternity was not proved in court.

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John (14) was brought into Juvenile Court on a larceny charge. It was found that he had taken \$11.00 from a man's pocket. He returned \$8.55 to the police woman and said that he had spent the rest on candy, amusements, etc., at one of the nearby beaches. John was placed on six months' probation.

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At the time of John's delinquency the mother was allegedly entertaining various men in the home and consequently John was allowed to run wild. He had little love and practically no respect for her, telling the worker that she was "no damn good". He was not too concerned about the stealing but considered it a rather "neat job".

The supervisor of school attendance stated that John was definitely neglected by his mother. He stayed out late at night and was the leader of a gang of truants in the school. His mother did not cooperate with the school and had no control over him. The attendance officer felt that John had many likeable qualities and could be reached if he were placed away from the influence of his mother.

The worker made friends with John and agreed with the attendance officer that foster home placement of the right kind might be beneficial. John was a bright youngster with superior intelligence. Although he had missed a great many school sessions he was still able to keep up with his eighth grade work and would probably progress rapidly if he concentrated upon study. His teachers felt that he had possibilities and were inclined to place the entire blame for his delinquency upon his mother.

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was fond of boys and an active out-door person. John joined the Boy Scouts and became much attached to his scoutmaster. It is said that he tried to please him in all that he did.

It was not possible for the worker to follow John closely because of the policy of the child placing agency. However, at the end of six months his case was filed and to date no further delinquency (known) has been reported.

"When a child's own home does not offer him the condition to which every normal child has a right, the effort should be made, even though he presents a behavior problem, to give him an environment which insures individual care and affection." (1) In summarizing the family backgrounds of the boys they studied the Gluecks say: "The picture is one of social inadequacy, unwholesome psychologic atmosphere, poor heredity, low moral standards and family criminality.....the unwholesome background of our delinquent boys must be taken into account in defining the task which faces clinics, court and other social agencies." (2) When these two statements are set forth very nearly everything is said that may be put down regarding when is the advisable time to put delinquent children in foster homes.

(1) Healy, Wm. & Others: Reconstructing Behavior in Youth, p. 114.

(2) Glueck, S. & E.: One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents, pp. 82-83.

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(1) Heston, M. & Glueck, S.: Delinquency in Youth, p. 114.
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Certainly John's case shows that for him it was an adequate solution. In Reconstructing Behavior in Youth it is shown that placing is not only practicable but very highly successful for any one kind of delinquency or for any combination of delinquencies if the child is of normal mentality and personality. Only when delinquency appears in conjunction with pathological, mental, or personality traits does the outlook appear poor.

One question which he pushed with great insistence was whether this delinquency would go on record and later be held against Edward when he applied for a job. He was greatly relieved to learn that it would leave no blot upon the character of his brother.

On a home visit the worker found that the mother was an invalid, having suffered a shock some years ago. She was very lame and moved about with difficulty. Her hands were swollen and could be used only a little. She was a small woman with a frank, pleasant-appearing face. She lamented her son's delinquency, explaining that he had always been such a good boy and a help to the family. During her illness he had been especially helpful with the two younger children, a boy (8) and a girl (10). She explained that he had been going about with boys of whom she did not approve and she had cautioned him against them. No amount of effort

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EDWARD

Edward, 16, and in the third year of high school, was brought into Juvenile Court because he was seen taking a seventy-five cent pair of gloves in one of the down town department stores. He was given a suspended sentence and placed on probation. A brother, four years his senior, was in court with him and gave information freely and at length. One question which he pushed with great insistence was whether this delinquency would go on record and later be held against Edward when he applied for a job. He was greatly relieved to learn that it would leave no blot upon the character of his brother.

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on the worker's part could get her to discuss anything else but her son's delinquency. She was so upset when she heard about it that she almost experienced another shock. All the time during this conversation about his delinquency Edward maintained silence. He spoke only when a question was addressed to him directly and then as briefly as possible. When asked how he was, he told the worker he was fine in as few words as possible.

The subject of camp for the summer was brought up but his mother could not bear to have anybody away from the home. The members of her family were always in by eight o'clock and she maintained with great emphasis that they were devoted to one another.

The father was mentioned only vaguely and then in an evasive manner as though occupation, the kind of man he was, etc., were not being discussed. Finally it developed that he was a shoe repair man and that he worked irregularly. At times apparently there had been real want, the older brother's salary being rather meager.

The worker saw Edward alone upon several occasions and established a friendly relationship. Edward seemed to look forward to those meetings with the worker. Upon occasion he remarked that it must be rather "swell" to be an only child, because then your family could do things for you, give you an education "and things" - which last never

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seemed to get itself defined very clearly. He seemed to do average work in school and showed one or two report cards in which he failed in Algebra, but said that his cousin was tutoring him and he would make out all right.

His mother's illness had decreased the family budget and increased the amount of work to be done. His older sister, Ida, whom the worker saw in one of his visits to the home, took over the responsibility of the home but the mother still ruled her family with an iron hand. Perhaps because of her infirmities her children catered to her in all that she demanded, which at times seemed to be a great deal. The periodic want depressed Edward and he seemed to talk a great deal about it.

Edward appeared to be a quiet, reticent, moody boy. His home situation was unpleasant for him and his mother made many exacting demands upon him. His older brother and sister assumed a great deal of the supervision of the boy. He had few friends and brooded a great deal. Tests at the child guidance clinic showed that he was capable of doing only ninth grade work although he was in the eleventh grade. His inability to make a good scholastic adjustment was a real source of humility to him. The specific delinquency seemed to be incidental in the total personality picture. It occurred under conditions which might have drawn any boy into it.

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It was suggested by the worker that the case be filed because it seemed only to aggravate the oppressive home condition. The stigma of the court record and probation had given the family added reason to repress the boy. The whole experience with the court seemed greatly to impress the boy and it was felt that for a greater good, the case should be filed.

The worker continued a friendly interest for some time and finally received permission of the family to take him to camp for two weeks during the summer, the fee having been obtained from outside sources by the worker. Edward was delighted with the prospect and showed more enthusiasm than he had hitherto displayed when it finally became definite that he was going to camp. He improved physically to a marked degree, but the very noticeable change in him as a person was commented on by all the counsellors. He was shy and reticent and seemed not to know just what to do in a group of boys. When he left the camp he had made friends with several boys and became particularly friendly with one of the older counsellors who was a boys' worker in a neighborhood house during the winter. Although Edward did not live in the immediate vicinity of this settlement house he expressed a desire to join the boys' club and was assured that he would be welcome.

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STANDARD AND CONCLUSION

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Since the opening of this century there has been a marked change in the attitude of most people toward the problem of delinquency. In the nineteenth century the humanitarian outlook on almost all problems of human life was so tempered with sentimentality that to-day we speak disparagingly of "The Victorians". With the dawn of the twentieth century a scientific attitude replaced the sentimental one and temporarily at least the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme. To-day with our psychiatric approach

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to most problems we have appropriated the best of both earlier attitudes and have found a fairly successful method of dealing with a host of social and human problems, including delinquency.

Immediately the question arises: what is delinquency? Phyllis Maudsley sets forth her definition as follows: "The first sign of failure in the socializing process may be found in the development of undesirable attitudes of behavior. When these are carried to such an extreme that they draw the child into open conflict with the social regulations of organized society we have juvenile delinquency." (1) This then is a social definition of

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ENCLOSURE VIA TRANSMIT

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delinquency. What Miss Blanchard refers to as "undesirable patterns of behavior" might well be called pre-delinquent manifestations.

Burt classifies juvenile delinquency legally for us:

"The offenses committed compose for the most part such breaks of the law as would be punishable in an adult by penal servitude or imprisonment - stealing, burglary, damage, common assault, indecent assault, and soliciting; to this bit must also be added certain other misdeeds which none but a child can commit, as truancy, and being beyond parental control; and one or two which, while offending against no explicit legal enactment may become the ground for official intervention, for example, inordinate lying and sexual impropriety..... Larceny and offenses akin to larceny are by far the most prevalent, accounting, indeed, among male offenders for nearly 80% of the total." (1)

August Aichhorn contends: "Dissocial behaviour indicates that the psychic processes which determine behaviour are not functioning harmoniously. This formulation enables us to define the problem of delinquency psychoanalytically and points the way toward a solution. Delinquency can now be considered as a dynamic expression; it can be attributed to the interplay of psychic forces, which have created the

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distortion which we call dissocial behaviour." (1)

The underlying causes of delinquency are many and no one factor can be singled out as the cause (sole) in any specific delinquency. The New York Crime Commission concluded that there is no unit cause for crime, but it is the result of a combination of environmental causes. They feel that every friend, every group, the school, the church, the street gang, all these are environment for the growing child and that each gives attitudes, words, experiences for the growing child. Furthermore they are convinced that if family influences are sufficiently strong and effective the other influences are trivial and slight deviations. Those who believe that innate congenital factors are the prime determinants in the conduct of the juvenile delinquent will not be in accord with the New York Crime Commission. However, those who believe with Healy and Bronner that environment plays the more important part as a causative factor in delinquency will take a more hopeful attitude toward the successful treatment of juvenile delinquents.

The case discussions did not reveal that parental attitudes per se were the direct cause of delinquency. Rather, it may be reasonably stated that these parental attitudes did in some measure affect the delinquency of the

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children studied here. It may also be reasonably concluded that too often the foundation of the delinquency in question was laid by the parents themselves who failed in the upbringing of their children.

Joseph who wanted to be a "big shot", undoubtedly was striving in some measure for recognition. His mother did not understand that phase of him apparently and she could not relinquish her need for him even though it meant perhaps the happy adjustment of his life. She could not realize that he had his own life to live and in order to make it a fairly happy one he needed room to make his own decisions, to stand on his own two feet without her constant over-protection and the burden of her exaggerated love for him. That she alone was responsible for his delinquency would be a fallacy; that she interfered constantly with the treatment would be more nearly correct.

Richard was found to be in a definite state of rebellion against his parents. The parents, though manifesting willingness to cooperate with the worker failed to comprehend his complex situation. They responded to his rebellious attitude by a stiff and dogmatic, but poorly managed discipline. The continual bickering in the home, the attitude of the grandparents, the discrepancy in the parental attitudes, apparently going on for years and aggravated by economic insecurity, not only characterized his parents'

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response to his present state, but probably was an essentially causative factor in his maladjustment. His delinquency was perhaps but one symptom of this condition.

Grace was burdened too early in life with the care of a growing family. She had no adequate time to play, to grow up. Her family's lack of understanding of her needs, her father's inordinate beating, the inability of her mother physically to assume her rightful place in the household - all these provoked if they did not actually cause her running away.

John may have had a pre-disposition to delinquency in view of his mother's history. But certainly too her questionable habits and the unwholesome home environment added their bit to his situation and he reacted to it by his delinquency.

Edward may have become delinquent as the result of some intrinsic psychic pressure aggravated by his unhappiness at home. His mother because of her physical condition, perhaps, exacted too much from all of the family. However, it is not possible to state just what it is in an environment, which is said to be the same for all, that makes one child delinquent and the other non-delinquent. To begin with, however, it is fallacy to state that environment is the same for each child in the same family because back of all lies the riddle of the child's own personality.

In dealing with human behavior, whether good or bad,

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In dealing with human behavior, whether good or bad,

it is essential to appreciate and understand that conduct is always motivated by some inner force. Some environmental factor may be a precipitating cause but it is the state of mind which will determine whether or not events will result in conduct of a disrupting character.

Seldom do children reach the adolescent stage without having had some experiences that were very definitely of a delinquent type. These temporary deviations from the so-called straight and narrow path, need not be regarded as occasion for alarm, yet they require wise handling on the part of parents if they are not to be repeated. It is the task of social agencies to aid parents in their efforts to understand what makes a child delinquent and just how their attitudes have affected him. Mistakes are made because the symptoms of delinquency are often mistaken for the disease. Because a symptom has been eradicated does not mean that delinquency has been cured. August Aichhorn warns us: "without the discovery of the deep underlying causes of delinquency, any cure is accidental." (1)

(1) Aichhorn, August: Wayward Youth, p. 41.

delinquency, any one is socialized." (1)

Without the discovery of the deep underlying causes of

delinquency has been noted. August Alshorn warns us;

because a symptom has been eradicated does not mean that

symptoms of delinquency are often mistaken for the disease.

Attitudes have affected him. Mistakes are made because the

understand what makes a child delinquent and just how their

task of social agencies to aid parents in their efforts to

part of parents if they are not to be repeated. It is the

occasion for alarm, yet they require wise handling on the

called straight and narrow path, need not be regarded as

delinquent type. These temporary deviations from the so-

having had some experiences that were very definitely of a

Seldom do children reach the adolescent stage without

in conduct of a disturbing character.

mind which will determine whether or not events will result

factor may be a precipitating cause but it is the state of

always motivated by some inner force. Some environmental

it is essential to appreciate and understand that conduct is

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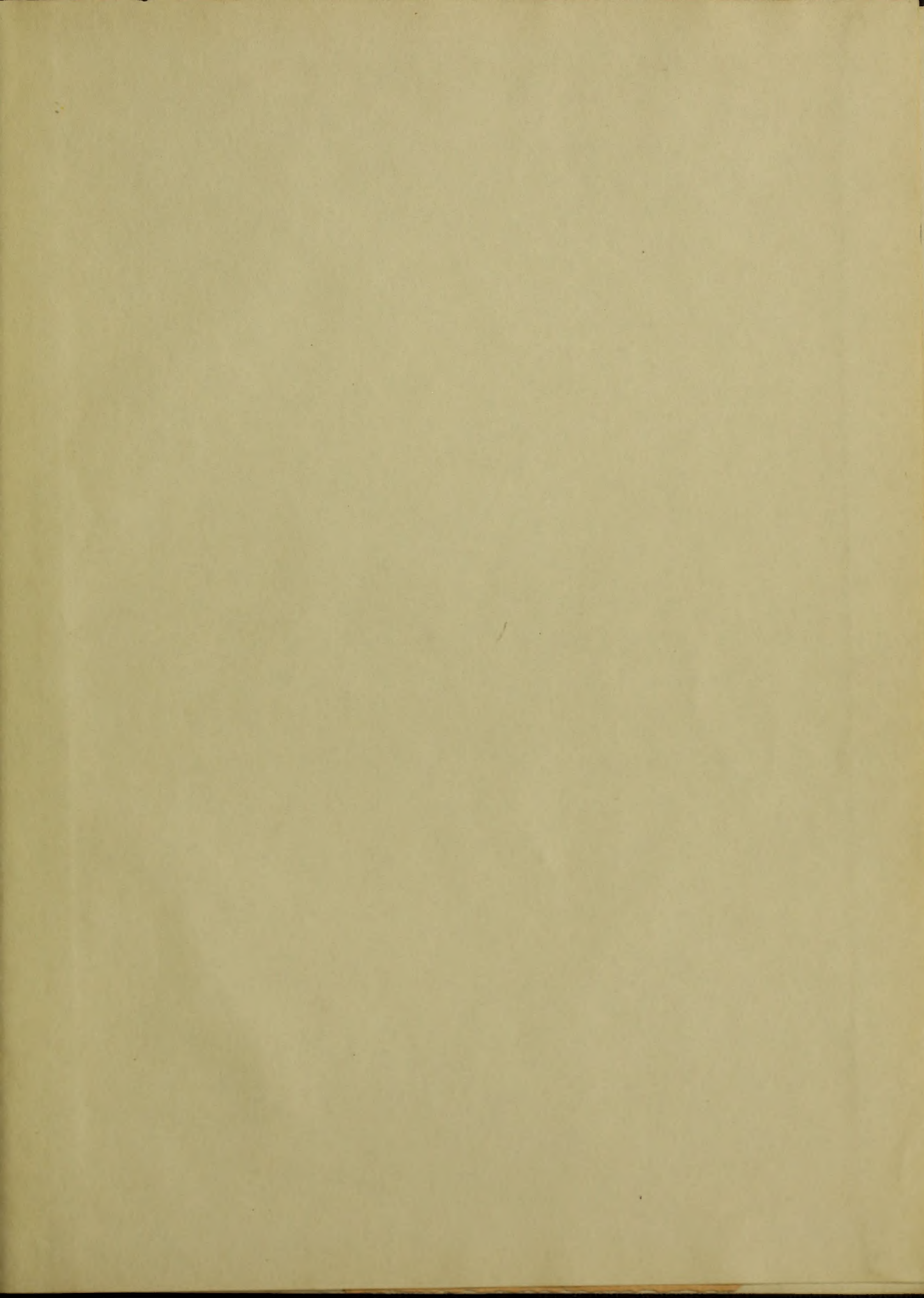
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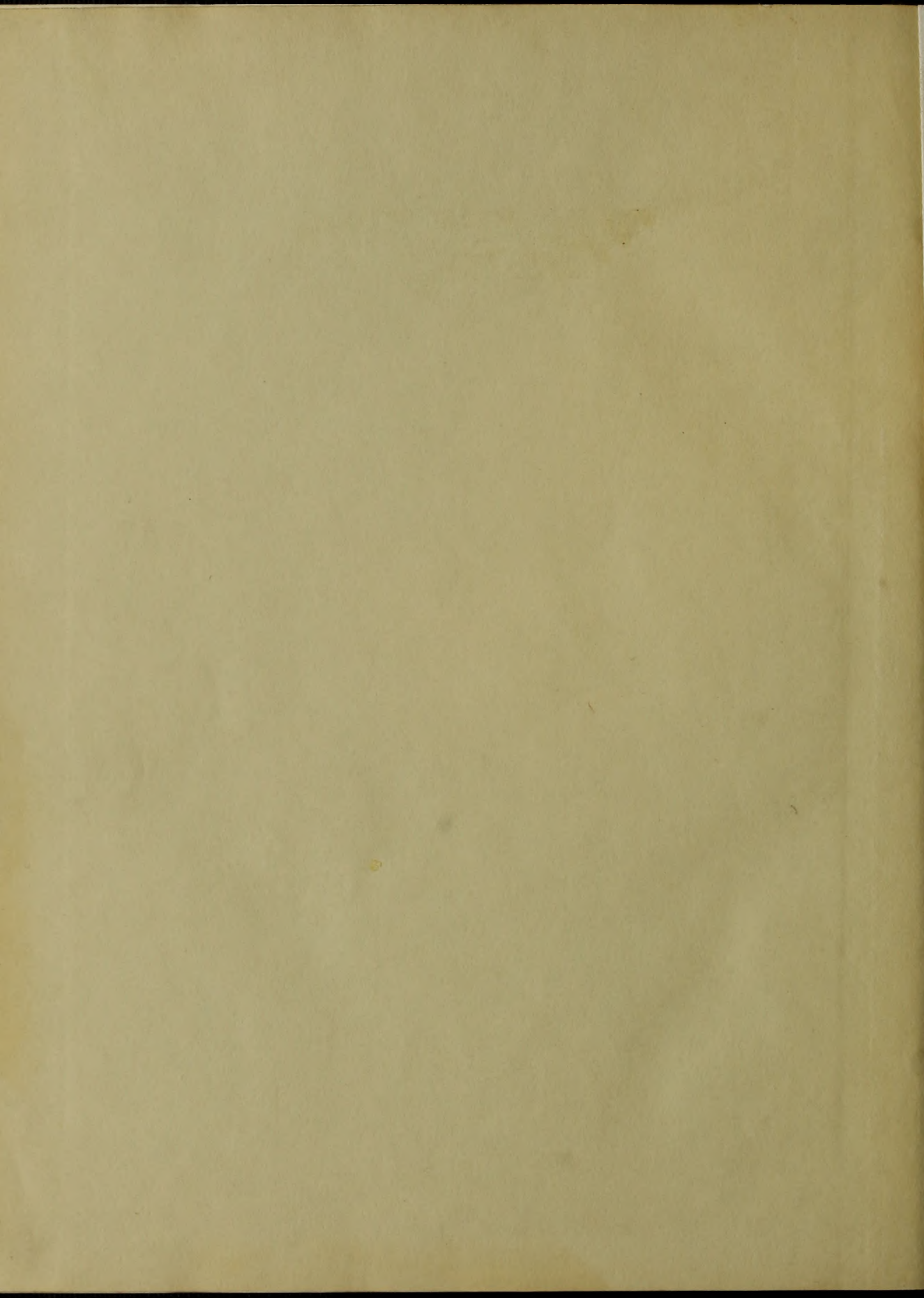
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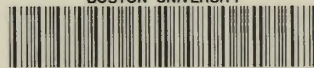
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